

3<sup>rd</sup> St. Vincent Place S.  
Melbourne  
6<sup>th</sup> Aug 1884.

My dear Andrew

I was reminded by a passage in a late letter from you to Walter that I owed you a letter. In this matters time flies by very quickly, and at the time I was not sure who had written <sup>last</sup> although, of course, I do not, nor do I suppose, are you, affected by such a consideration.

You will pardon my referring to the weather. July has been a right mournful month. The Doon of Manchester said he came out to get a look at the sun. He was not much gratified last month. Heavens skies and frost laden north winds have overhung and traversed Melbourne for 6 weeks past, and I am sensibly more cheerful since August has opened with a breath of Spring, and Australia is once more commencing to justify Lord Roseberys phrase for her - "the radiant continent". I am big on the nobility in this paragraph, but don't be alarmed; my democratic principles have not by any means weakened since I have been in Victoria - Au contraire.

How much better <sup>than</sup> than it can I.  
turn my increased cheerfulness to a  
purpose than by writing to you, my  
dear old Padre? I do not know. And  
so it is I ~~sat~~ sit down to write with  
a trembling consciousness that I may be  
but little able to infuse into this pen  
and ink and paper what my heart  
would fain express.

I am glad to inform you that  
my physical health is good, save a cold  
which has harassed me off and on for  
some months. This bothers me much at  
times but I have no positive illness from  
it. My mental state is also good, although  
there has been a much greater strain on  
me this year than last. The work is  
heavier at the office - I have to do a  
regular allowance of chess work (some)  
paid for and some not/- and I am  
reading as much as social engagements  
will permit. Walter with his usual kindness  
has offered to read literature and law with  
me and I am about to settle a programme  
which I shall, with his help, try to follow up.

It may interest you to learn that the Victorian Chess & Draughts Club, in the foundation of which I took part, is in a very flourishing condition, numbering about 50 members, and rapidly becoming the chess resort of Melbourne. There is a handicap tourney going on at present in which Simpson & I are at scratch. Notwithstanding a heavy handicap I have preserved the leading position up to the present. The Melbourne Chess Club is in a moribund condition, and they are now using every endeavor to induce our Club to amalgamate with theirs, preserving the name of the Melbourne Chess Club. There is likely to be a fight over this presently, but I feel pretty certain that our Club will decide to keep its autonomy. While on the subject of Chess I may mention that I am in negotiation with Walter Franklyn of the "Federal Australian" to start a Chess column in that journal - I expect a favorable answer this week, and I shall endeavor to get a couple of guineas a week for the work at least. So much for the Royal Game.

On Wednesday evening 30th July a social meeting was held in a large room of the Co-operative Society in Collins St E. G. H. Turner filled the chair. The object of the meeting was to welcome Mr Waeters and bid farewell & make a presentation to Mrs Webster on her retirement from her ministry. I went with G. H. to this meeting. I may mention that the latter has got very thick with Mrs Webster and works with her in regard to the Australian Health Society & also the Women's Rights Association - the "Screaming Sisterhood" as the worthy Mr Lloyd used to dub them. About 300 people were present. From 7 to 8 o'clock was spent in general buzzing. At 8 o'clock Turner opened the ball with a short address in which he briefly touched upon the quarter of a century of Unitarianism in Melbourne, & wound up by welcoming Waeters. The latter then addressed the meeting. Waeters is about my age, with rather a youthful look about him. He has a pretty fair head. The most peculiar appearance about his face is the under lip which shoots forward prominently. He has a good voice & clear style & conveys the notion of being sincere & sympathetic. I was not introduced to him before this evening. Mrs W introduced me as being one of a small

nucleus in Tasmania whose creed was in  
accord with Rational Christianity. I was also  
introduced to Mrs Walters. The latter considerably  
surprised me. Imagine a lady above the  
average height, almost as broad as she is long,  
with no suspicion of a neck & two well  
defined chins. Altogether one who might exclaim  
with the liver-disordered Dane,

"Oh that this too, too, solid flesh would melt"

As becomes a corpulent person she appears  
agreeable and good humored, and short winded;  
and her black eyes are vivacious enough.  
When she put her hand in mine, on introduction,  
it was such a great soft wonder that I was  
almost tempted to squeeze it; but I didn't, I'm  
glad to say. It wouldn't do to start the new  
ministration with a scandal. Mrs Hand so  
respectfully requested not to laugh at all this.  
Well, - where were we? Oh! ah! - Mr Walters  
addressed the meeting. Among other things he said  
somebody in Scotland had recommended him  
to the Unitarian Committee here as a "go ahead"  
man; that they must recollect they had taken  
him on this; so that if, in the course of his  
ministry he, in many matters of usage departed  
from the order & conservative side of Unitarianism,



he must plead the recommendation on which they  
accepted him as his justification. He alluded  
to the innovations he had introduced into  
the Church service as an evidence of the  
tendency of his thought. I may say, par  
parenthèse, that I had noticed this. He has  
set himself to abolish all the expressions around  
which cluster the dogmas of popular Christianity.  
In pursuance of this idea he has determined to  
knock out most of the hymns that appear  
in the present book in use in the Church.  
I am quite in sympathy with this movement.  
Songs & recitations succeeded this address, &  
then a presentation was made to me Weber  
in the shape of a travelling bag accompanied  
by a very flattering and cordial address. Mr. W.  
replied with great self possession & in very good  
terms, winding up with a quotation from old  
Worby where he does some shovel work or  
something for a feeble old man: —

"I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds  
With coarseness still returning,  
Alas! the gratitude of men  
Has oftener left me mourning."

I was surprised when in conversation with the ex. Puestees on the way to the Railway Station to find she misapprehended the meaning of the last line. I said to her "I presume you meant it to be I knew that the gratitude & praise accorded made you sad in one way because you felt that your work had been far below in worth what you could have wished it to be to merit such expressions" To this pretty speech she said "Yes" It was while talking further of the lines that I happened to say the meaning apparently was that the effusive gratitude of the old man for the simple service rendered him made the poet sad because he reflected how comparatively rare acts of kindness were when they could evoke a gratitude in which appeared to lurk a surprise that the service had been rendered. She said the lines had not conveyed this meaning to her, but that this apparently was the one intended. Mrs Webster informs me her departure for England will take place at the end of the year, and she would be very glad to see you before she goes.

It may not be out of place here to  
make some comments on the figure Mr  
Walters cuts in the pulpit. He has a  
pleasing appearance & a strong clear articulation.  
His mental acquirements are displayed in a  
somewhat peculiar fashion. In conversation one  
evening I put him off as "The Rev. Dr  
Inverted Commas". To my mind a great  
defect in his addresses is the persistent use  
he makes of quotation. He is quite catholic  
in the sources he appeals to - Other Christian  
theologies, poetry by the bushel, novels, paganism,  
Buddhism, Confucianism, Science, & above all,  
he can introduce a comic story in good  
style. Now, all this is very good; but it is not  
good when he enriches his discourse with  
long pagan stories & endless poetic quotations.  
One of his addresses was nearly all Paganism  
& Galatea; & when he gets on to Poetry he  
rips out stanza after stanza with terrific  
prodigality; & worst of all, he trots out all  
the old slogans; & I feel sometimes as I  
used to feel when a fossil pen smote my  
long suffering tympanum. There is one point,  
however, on which he warms me. He evidently



leans a good deal to the doctrine that the comic  
is the divine" - It is quite refreshing to hear a  
gentle ripple go round the Church at one of  
his sallies, & I feel inclined to chip in  
with some applause. I maintain (alibi for  
Risby) that when a man handles the humorous  
venn well, on subjects that times when your  
ordinary cuss would never dare to touch it,  
it is a good sign, & argues well for the health  
of his humanity. Why, even some of those  
sorey sermons droned out in the orthodox  
pulpit, would be bearable if they had some  
of the gentle glow of humor & the pure sparkle  
of wit, both of which assuredly derive  
their luminousness from "the light which  
never was on sea or land" - Don't think  
that Walter is always reaching for the  
cass and bells. I think he is an earnest  
man; and that he meets with great favor  
from the cream of the Unitarian congregation  
is a fact more convincing than my praise or blame  
when I next write I may <sup>hold forth</sup> write to you again  
on this subject.

Need I say how glad I was that

the 4<sup>th</sup> of July last was marked with  
another red letter. Both Walter & myself are  
proud to think we contributed a little to the  
success of the meeting. I was busy on the 4<sup>th</sup>  
& did not go to the American Consul's reception.  
It is in truth, it is a dull business at the best.  
I know none of them, & to listen to a few  
formal words, and swing some champagne,  
and then to go off into the unheeding  
crowds of the street, is depressing. Sufficient  
to say I saw the Slavery Banner waving  
over the towers of Collins St & what I  
felt then could not be appeased by official  
formalities. I feel something like Motley  
must have done <sup>in Germany</sup> when in default of anybody  
else to unburden himself to <sup>in Germany</sup> he  
shouted out through the doorway to his  
sleeping infant "Richmond is taken".

I must end this long wounded epistle  
now, begging you "to commend me to your  
honorable wife" and to bestow some osculatory  
favors on the Kinchins as from "Buddler Joe".  
Unchanged regards to Willie, Bobbie & Lucy -  
Tell Bobbie to write. General remembrances to Minnie's  
Club, and lastly accept for yourself dear Katie  
the affectionate regards & remembrances  
of A. L. Norton

P.S. Number Woolly,

I have not yet read Comyns book on Emerson which you have twice referred to and enjoined me to read. I have not forgotten it, however. I got the essays by Curtis, and read them with much enjoyment. It appears that you think "Chateau d'Espagne" more fitted for Walter than me. but I have to try and possess myself of some of these seductive residences, nevertheless. I will not forget to look after Rosmini.

Tell Hector I received his letter with much pleasure, and am glad he has not quite forgotten me.

Miss Ababel Ross called on me at the office last Saturday - She got my address from Walter. She looks well, and tells me she is going over at Xmas. of course, she says I must come over.

By the bye has Silvalore turned up in Hobart. I interested myself with the Consul General here to assist him back to Tasmania. Poor Silvalore got fearfully hard up here;

& I was glad I moved successfully in  
his behalf. The Consul General for Italy  
is the Marquis of de Goyzueta. It appears  
the "Marquis" took a bit of a fancy to me  
& sent an invitation, through Salvatore for me  
to come and see him whenever I liked.  
Salvatore tells me he is a thorough believer  
in Mazzini & the Republic, and has little  
regard for titles - As I understand he is  
true grit I may be tempted to beat  
him up as the Marquis is willing.  
The Italians have just established a club  
here; and the French have a very strong  
one at the Cathedral Hotel where our  
Chess Club meets.

Addio

*[Signature]*

P. S. to Bly. We are to be pitted - The  
Small Fox has broken out in the heart  
of Melbourne not far from our office.  
I send a photo of "Balmoral Terrace" which may interest you.  
Some of the lodgers are perched - The first to the left on the top is  
Mr. Stew a Scotch Mining Surveyor, then your friend Mr. Gooding his cat  
"Shop". Then Giles a Contractor, down below the bath figures leaning  
with his hands in his pockets is Captain Beeston late of the Indian Army  
and next to him Westhope a young Englishman lately out from home.